

Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (Basic Instrument for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization -- NAFO)

Basic Instrument

Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (entered into force January 1, 1979).

Implementing Legislation

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 (Title II of P.L.104-43).

Member Nations

Current members of NAFO include: Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of the Faeroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (EU), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United States. The United States acceded to the Convention on November 29, 1995, and participated for the first time as a Contracting Party at the 1996 Annual Meeting (the United States attended earlier annual meetings as an observer).

Commission Headquarters

Executive Secretary: Dr. Johanne Fischer

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Budget

NAFO adopted an annual budget for 2006 of Can\$1,519,000, resulting in an administrative budget (annual budget minus accumulated surplus) of Can\$1,318,146. The U.S. assessment for 2006 is Can\$208,889 (approximately US\$178,935).

U.S. Representation

A. The Appointment Process:

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 provides that not more than three U.S. Commissioners and not more than three U.S. Representatives to the NAFO Scientific Council (see below) shall represent the United States in NAFO. Commissioners and Representatives are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and serve at his pleasure. Each Commissioner and Representative is appointed for a term not to exceed 4 years, but is eligible for reappointment.

Of the three Commissioners, one (but no more than one) must be an official of the U.S. Government, at least one a representative of the commercial fishing industry, and one a voting (non-government employee) member of the New England Fishery Management Council. Commissioners must be knowledgeable and experienced concerning the fishery resources to which the NAFO Convention applies. Of the three U.S. Representatives to the NAFO Scientific Council, at least one must be an official of the U.S. Government. All Representatives must be knowledgeable and experienced concerning the scientific issues dealt with by the Scientific Council.

B. U.S. Representatives:

U.S. Commissioners (expiration date in parentheses):

Dean Swanson (03/10)
Chief, Division of International Fisheries Affairs
Office of International Affairs
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

John W. Pappalardo
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210 New Orleans Road
N. Chatham, MA 02650

James W. Salisbury
130 Eastern Promenade
Portland, ME 04101

Representatives to the Scientific Council:

Fredric M. Serchuk
Chief, Resource Evaluation and Assessment Division
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

C. Advisory Structure:

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 further requires that the Secretaries of Commerce and State establish jointly a Consultative Committee to advise the Secretaries on issues related to the Convention. Each member of the Consultative Committee shall serve for a term of 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. The membership of the Committee shall consist of representatives from the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the States represented on those Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the fishing industry, the seafood processing industry, and others knowledgeable and experienced in the conservation and management of fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic. There are currently six members of the NAFO Consultative Committee.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

NAFO is the successor organization to the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF). Its mission is: (1) to provide for continued multilateral consultation and cooperation with respect to the study, appraisal, and exchange of scientific information and views relating to fisheries of the Convention Area and (2) to conserve and manage fishery resources of the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA), i.e., that part of the Convention Area which lies beyond the areas in which coastal states exercise fisheries jurisdiction. The Convention Area is located within the waters of the Northwest Atlantic ocean roughly north of 35° north latitude and west of 42° west latitude.

(Note: The Convention applies to all fishery resources of the Convention Area with the exception of: salmon; tunas, swordfish, and marlins; cetacean stocks managed by the International Whaling Commission or any successor organization; and sedentary species of the Continental Shelf.)

(1) Organizational Structure:

NAFO consists of a General Council, Fisheries Commission, Scientific Council, a Secretariat, and seven standing committees. The General Council provides executive guidance for the Secretariat and provides a forum for member nations' approval of programs and regulations. The Scientific Council provides a forum for the exchange of scientific information and views relating to the fisheries of the Convention Area; compiles, maintains, and publishes statistics pertaining to the fisheries, including environmental and ecological factors in the Convention Area; provides scientific advice to coastal states when requested to do so; and provides scientific advice to the NAFO Fisheries Commission. The Fisheries Commission is responsible for the management and conservation of the fishery resources of the Regulatory Area. The Standing Committees consider and make recommendations in the areas of (1) finance and administration; (2) the fishing activities of non-Contracting Parties in the NRA; (3) inspection and control; (4) fishery science; (5) research coordination; (6) publications; and (7) fisheries environment.

B. Programs:

Background: NAFO has established and maintained conservation and management measures in the NRA since 1979. These measures currently include: total allowable catches (TACs) and member nation quota allocations by species; one fishing effort allocation; data recording and reporting requirements; vessel monitoring system (VMS) and observer requirements; minimum size limitations; mesh size and chafing gear requirements; and notification, registration and hailing requirements for fishing vessels operating in the NRA. In addition, NAFO has a scheme of joint international inspection and surveillance in the NRA.

The principal species managed by NAFO are cod, flounders, redfish, American plaice, Greenland halibut (turbot), capelin and shrimp. Occasionally, a significant squid fishery occurs in the Regulatory Area as well. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, unregulated fishing in the NRA by non-member States (sometimes by reflagged vessels of member States); under-reporting of catches; overharvesting by Canada of stocks that straddle the line between Canada's exclusive economic zone and the NRA; and fishing by a NAFO member under objection (the EU) all contributed to the eventual collapse of 8 of the 13 stocks managed by NAFO (the NAFO Convention provides that a management measure is not binding on any contracting party that formally objects to it). As a result, NAFO was forced to impose moratoria on fishing on these stocks in the NRA. Many NAFO-regulated species remain at all-time low levels (or the lowest level ever recorded), and NAFO-imposed moratoria continued for eight of these stocks in 2006.

U.S. Allocations: For 2006, the United States received the following country-specific allocations in the NRA: Division 3M redfish (69 mt); Division 3L shrimp (245 mt); Subareas 3+4 *Illex* squid (453 mt); and an effort allocation of 100 fishing days for 1 vessel for Division 3M shrimp. U.S. fishermen are also entitled to harvest, on a first-come-first-served basis, any allocation for which an "Others" category has been designated, provided there is not a country-specific allocation to the United States for that fishery. For 2006, "Others" category allocations may be available to U.S. fishermen in Division 3LNO yellowtail flounder (76mt), Division 3O Redfish (100mt), Division 3NO white hake (500mt), and Division 3LNO skates (500mt). Additionally, the United States may fish any portion of the 627mt TAC of Oceanic redfish available to non-NEAFC members in Subarea 2 and Divisions 1F and 3K, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Monitoring and Enforcement: Work relating to development and strengthening of NAFO compliance and enforcement measures is generally done at both annual meetings and intersessional meetings of in the Fisheries Commission and its Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC). In 1999, NAFO began requiring the use of observers on 100 percent of Contracting Party vessels operating in the NRA. NAFO has also required 100 percent use of VMS on Contracting Party vessels operating in the NRA since January 1, 2001. Additionally, NAFO continues to develop and refine its monitoring and enforcement measures. Procedures have been adopted for: processing information from at-sea inspections; a hail system requiring 6-hour advance notification by vessels entering or leaving the NRA and 24-hour advance notification by vessels transshipping at sea; a requirement for NAFO Contracting Parties to inspect the fishing vessels of other Contracting Parties during port calls to verify species and quantities caught.

At the January 2002 Special Meeting, a U.S. proposal was adopted providing for an annual review of compliance with the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures. This step was taken against the backdrop of a Canadian presentation showing numerous infringements of these Measures by vessels of NAFO Contracting Parties. The annual review was designed to be carried out by STACTIC (with input from the NAFO Secretariat) for consideration by the Fisheries Commission. Since the September 2002 NAFO Annual Meeting, both Canada and the European Union have made annual presentations on compliance based on their respective monitoring and enforcement activities in the Regulatory Area. Though the initial compliance review process was hindered by non-standardized reporting and a lack of personnel to assess existing data, there is strong support among NAFO Contracting Parties for this initiative and improvements continue.

Non-Contracting Party Fishing: In 1998, NAFO implemented the Scheme to Promote Compliance by Non-Contracting Party Vessels with the Conservation and Enforcement Measures Established by NAFO. This Scheme presumes that a non-Contracting Party (NCP) vessel that has been sighted fishing in the NRA is undermining NAFO conservation and enforcement measures. If such vessels enter the ports of Contracting Parties, they must be inspected. No landings or transshipments are permitted in Contracting Party ports unless such vessels establish that certain species on board were not caught in the NRA, and for certain other species that the vessel applied the NAFO conservation and enforcement measures. Contracting Parties must report the results of inspections to NAFO and all other Contracting Parties. The scheme also calls for coordinated joint demarches by NAFO Contracting Parties to the governments of NCPs whose vessels had been observed fishing in the NRA requesting that the activity be stopped.

NAFO Contracting Parties may also board, inspect, and apply actions in accordance with international law against vessels appearing to be operating without nationality (stateless vessels). In addition, Parties are encouraged to “examine the appropriateness of domestic measures to exercise jurisdiction over such vessels.” NAFO contacts relevant nations to attempt to confirm the registries of NCP vessels sighted fishing in the NRA, and has taken measures to increase communication and information sharing among relevant regional fisheries management organizations and international bodies (such as the FAO) regarding the fishing activities of such vessels. In addition, NAFO now actively reviews the issue of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing as it relates to on-going discussions at the FAO and is looking for ways to improve its dealings with such vessels and their flag states.

The Fisheries Commission fully integrated the provisions of the Scheme into the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures during recent efforts to streamline and improve this document.

Allocation of Fishing Rights: At the 1997 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States offered a proposal to reform NAFO’s quota allocation practices. In response, the Fisheries Commission formed an Allocation Working Group (WG), which first met in March 1998. This first meeting of the Working Group focused first on setting guidelines for future discussions, including: exploring the meaning of the term “real interest” in relation to future new members; considering adoption of a broad strategy to guide expectations of future new members with regard to fishing opportunities in the NRA; development of a broad strategy to allocate future fishing opportunities for stocks not currently allocated; and exploring in connection with stocks under TACs possible margins to accommodate requests for fishing opportunities.

Discussion at the 1999 Working Group meeting focused on a number of useful working papers submitted by Contracting Parties on the topics agreed at the previous meeting. These discussions resulted in some forward movement by the WG and a “Draft Resolution to Guide the Expectations of Future New Members with Regard to Fishing Opportunities in the NAFO Regulatory Area” was adopted noting that: any state may accede to the NAFO Convention; all Contracting Parties are members of the General Council; membership in the Fisheries Commission is limited to Contracting Parties who either presently fish or have an immediate intent to begin fishing in the NRA; and new Contracting Parties admitted into the Fisheries Commission can expect fishing opportunities to be limited to new fisheries or the quota allocation available to all Contracting Parties without a national quota (the “others” category) for stocks presently under TACs for the foreseeable future. This resolution was adopted at the 1999 NAFO Annual Meeting and it was agreed that the Allocation WG should meet again in March 2000.

Discussions during the 2000 meeting of the Working Group focused to a large degree on continued development of a broad strategy for allocation of future fishing opportunities for stocks not currently allocated. The WG attempted to

create non-exhaustive, non-prioritized “shopping lists” relating to both qualifying criteria and allocation criteria with regard to such opportunities. In addition, the WG examined possible opportunities for fishing opportunities on the margins of stocks currently under TAC. Much of this discussion related to the possible creation of an “others” quota. However there was no agreement regarding possible sources for such a quota, nor was it determined who should have access to the fish contained therein.

At the 2000 NAFO Annual Meeting, Contracting Parties examined the utility of continued work by the Working Group. The United States and others expressed strong support for continued work, noting that allocation issues pertaining to new stocks must be dealt with in a timely manner. Other Contracting Parties stated that allocative issues should be addressed only once stocks begin to recover. Following further discussion, it was decided that the Working Group would not meet in 2001. However, there was general agreement that further discussions on the allocation issue should take place during the 2001 annual meeting. The United States raised this issue at the January 2002 Special Meetings in order to ensure that it is included on the agenda for the September 2002 Annual Meeting. During the 2002 Annual Meeting, it was agreed that the Allocation Working Group should meet during early 2003 to continue its work. Terms of reference were agreed based on those in place when the work of the WG was suspended.

The March 2003 Working Group meeting focused primarily on consideration of two papers: a U.S. white paper proposing that NAFO develop a comprehensive list of allocation criteria that would be applicable in all situations (ala ICCAT), and the Report of the Norway-FAO Expert Consultation on the Management of Shared Fish Stocks. The Working Group chose not to follow the U.S. proposal, instead developing a list of allocation criteria applicable only to stocks that are not now and never have been allocated by NAFO. While the criteria are useful, their present scope is severely limited. Additionally, the Working Group agreed only to give a status report back to the Fisheries Commission, indicating the work that was done. It did not recommend adoption of that work or any next steps to be taken. The United States made a strong statement that the progress that had been made was very small, not particularly useful in practical terms, and that NAFO would suffer in the longer term if it continued to fail to address the allocation interests of all of its members. Since 2003, the Fisheries Commission has not called for any further meetings of this Working Group.

Precautionary Approach: At the 1996 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States introduced a draft paragraph for inclusion in the request for advice from the Fisheries Commission (FC) to the Scientific Council (SC). This paragraph noted the importance of early action to implement provisions of the precautionary approach and requested that the SC provide a report examining specific elements of these provisions and how they might be implemented in NAFO. In the years that followed this request, support among members of the Fisheries Commission for the implementation of the precautionary approach has been guarded but generally positive. During this time the SC has, at the request of the FC (and with some FC participation): developed a conceptual framework and Action Plan for implementing the Precautionary Approach in NAFO; collaborated with other relevant fisheries organizations that had similar initiatives underway (i.e., ICES, FAO and others); held a workshop of the precautionary approach in March 1998; examined theoretical, general and specific considerations regarding NAFO stocks; examined the role of scientists and fisheries managers in relation to the Precautionary Approach; and initiated and conducted simulations of a precautionary approach to management for three categories of NAFO fish stocks.

At the May 1999 meeting of the Joint SC/FC Working Group, it was recommended that both the SC and FC consider elements in designing and formulating further action in respect to implementation of the Precautionary Approach for the three stocks used in the simulation and that similar actions be taken for other NAFO stocks with related characteristics as the implementation of the Precautionary Approach progresses. At its 1999 Annual Meeting, NAFO adopted a U.S.-proposed resolution to guide the implementation of the precautionary approach within NAFO that addresses many of the U.S. concerns. It was also agreed that the joint FC/SC Working Group should meet in 2000 to continue work on this issue. A Canadian-proposed agenda was also adopted for this meeting.

At its February 2000 meeting, the Joint SC/FC Working Group agreed on: implementation plans for applying the precautionary approach to 2 out of 3 model stocks that had been identified earlier; a similar implementation plan for 3LNO American plaice; a generic template for applying the precautionary approach to other NAFO-managed stocks; and general criteria for reopening a fishery in light of the precautionary approach. Despite this progress however,

several issues of contention continue to plague the progress of the Working Group. Of particular concern are issues relating to terminology and operationalizing the precautionary approach within NAFO.

At the 2000 annual meeting, these and other concerns led Contracting Parties to consider whether or not the working group should continue its work. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that a small group of technical experts would meet in the first half of 2001 to advance future work in the Fisheries Commission Working Group. This group was to circulate a report to all Contracting Parties and recommend whether the Working Group should meet prior to the 2001 NAFO annual meeting. Unfortunately, this group was never convened.

At its June 2002 meeting, the Working Group examined and compared work done on the precautionary approach by the NAFO Scientific Council with that done by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). ICES provides scientific advice to a number of regional fisheries management organizations, including NEAFC. While the United States and Canada were strongly committed to the NAFO process and stressed the similarities between work done by NAFO and ICES, the European Union and other NEAFC members expressed concern regarding the differences. In the end, it was agreed that further progress could be made by addressing specific differences found between the NAFO and ICES work on precautionary approach. The Working Group recommended that the Fisheries Commission identify appropriate examples, and then instruct the Joint FC/SC Working Group to meet intersessionally to address them specifically. In addition, it was recommended that the Fisheries Commission consider development of long-term plans for application of the precautionary approach to different fleet sectors within NAFO. No action was taken on these WG recommendations by the Fisheries Commission at the 2002 Annual Meeting.

At the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Chairman of the Scientific Council presented to the Fisheries Commission a summary and overview of the proposed revised NAFO precautionary approach framework, adopted and refined by the Scientific Council in June and September 2003. The United States tabled a strong proposal calling for Fisheries Commission adoption of the proposed revised NAFO framework and agreement to hold an intersessional meeting of the Joint Fisheries Commission/Scientific Council Working Group to examine application scenarios for specific NAFO stocks. Although the U.S. proposal had some support among Contracting Parties, the proposal was not adopted based on NAFO Budget and time constraints. No further work on this issue was recommended by the Fisheries Commission.

During its 2004 Annual Meeting, the Fisheries Commission adopted a Canadian proposal (that received considerable input from the United States) calling for practical application of the precautionary approach by NAFO on two selected stocks. The proposal calls on the Scientific Council to provide advice within the revised precautionary approach framework for Div. 3LNO yellowtail flounder and Div. 3M shrimp. Division 3LNO yellowtail flounder represents a data-rich stock in good health, with a production-based assessment, and managed by TAC/quota. The Div. 3M shrimp stock is data-poor, in good condition, and managed by effort controls. This exercise is designed to facilitate future application of the revised NAFO precautionary approach framework, developed and adopted by the scientific council in 2003.

Transparency: The United States first raised this issue at the 1996 NAFO Annual Meeting and a working group was created, with the United States serving as Chair, to examine applicable rules of other organizations and arrangements. Subsequent intersessional meetings of the working group in 1997 and 1998 were contentious, with the Nordic countries (i.e., Iceland, Denmark, and Norway) particularly resistant, and only limited headway was made on the issue. As a result of the difficulty of the discussions, in 1998 the Chair tabled a highly bracketed paper, "Procedures for Observers," designed to address the concerns of all parties. Although some progress was made at the 1999 working group intersessional, several disagreements remained on terms for admitting observers to NAFO meetings.

At the 1999 NAFO Annual Meeting, Canada presented a compromise text that set criteria for observer eligibility and stipulated that groups can participate in sessions of the General Council and FC unless a majority of Contracting Parties vote to exclude them. It also allowed NGOs to participate in meetings of subsidiary bodies unless one or more Contracting Parties objected. The new rules would be in place for two years, after which NAFO could evaluate the success of the program. In the end, the General Council adopted a modified version of this proposal as presented by Denmark. Observers will only be able to sit in on sessions of the General Council and Fisheries

Commission, not subsidiary bodies. The NAFO Secretariat will receive applications from interested observers and determine if they meet the eligibility criteria, which include a written statement that the organization supports the goals of NAFO. The Secretariat will then notify all Contracting Parties which groups have been deemed eligible; they will be allowed to participate unless a Contracting Party objects for cause in writing. Any objection will lead to a mail vote among all members on the issue. The guidelines stipulate that the vote be conducted according to the usual NAFO decision-making rules; we interpret this to mean that once a party makes a motion to exclude the group, it can participate unless a majority of Contracting Parties agree to exclude. As in the Canadian proposal, NAFO can reevaluate these rules any time after 2001.

Dispute Settlement: NAFO continues to explore the desirability and feasibility of establishing a formal dispute settlement procedure for the organization. A working group, chaired by Norway, has held a number of meetings to consider a proposal put forth by Canada which is designed, in effect, to limit the use of the objection procedure and to enforce those limitations through compulsory, binding dispute settlement. In response, the EU has presented various counter proposals that have broader implications for NAFO. There is a common element to all the EU proposals: each would create a dispute settlement procedure for all NAFO disputes, not just those arising from the use of the objection procedure.

At the February 1999 meeting of the Working Group, Canada stated that it was now unsure that a dispute resolution mechanism, modeled along the way that the EU contemplates it, would be desirable. Conversely, the EU--which had originally resisted the proposal--has worked along with Norway to create a proposal whereby a broad number of disputes would initially be sent to an ad hoc dispute settlement panel (i.e. a non-binding procedure) and ultimately to binding dispute resolution as contemplated by the Fish Stocks Agreement.

At the 1999 NAFO Annual Meeting, Contracting Parties disagreed widely on the utility of continuing the Working Group. Canada argued that the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) is rapidly acquiring enough ratifications to enter into force. They noted that, as UNFSA includes procedures for settling disputes within regional fisheries organizations, NAFO should simply adopt those procedures. Canada did not think the DSP Working Group should continue to try to devise a separate NAFO procedure. Other Contracting Parties, most notably the EU, felt strongly that the DSP Working Group should continue. They argued that the UNFSA procedures were too slow to resolve a dispute within a single fishing season and would not apply to NAFO-regulated discrete stocks. Prompted by the United States, the General Council decided the DSP Working Group would continue, but under new terms of reference that focus on devising means to implement the UNFSA provisions in a NAFO context.

The May 2000 meeting of the DSP Working Group began with a discussion of whether the parties could agree to adopt recommendations found in a Chairman's Paper which essentially proposed incorporation by reference into the Convention, mutatis mutandis, the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The United States and Canada supported this approach, whereas the EU, Japan, and most of the other Contracting Parties were not very sympathetic. The focus of the meeting then shifted to an EU paper distributed at the last intersessional meeting which proposed the possibility of disputing parties choosing binding dispute settlement under the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, UNCLOS or an ad hoc NAFO procedure. Out of this discussion came a Chairman's Consolidated Text which included provisions for which there was general consensus and bracketed text for which there was not consensus.

At the 2000 NAFO Annual Meeting, Contracting Parties disagreed widely on the utility of continuing the DSP Working Group. Canada adopted the new position that NAFO should simply wait for the UN Agreement on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) to enter into force, instead of attempting to devise a separate NAFO procedure. Other Contracting Parties, most notably the EU, felt strongly that the working group should continue. They continued to argue that the UNFSA procedures were too slow to resolve a dispute within a single fishing season and would not apply to NAFO-regulated discrete stocks. The June 2001 DSP WG meeting saw further work on the heavily-bracketed Consolidated Text. The resulting document (Consolidated Text 2001~DSP W.G. W.P. 01/7 Rev2) reflects the current state of agreement and views expressed within the WG to date. At the end of this meeting, the EU tabled its own version of a Dispute Settlement Procedures text (DSP W.G. W.P. 01/10), indicating that it might table this version as a possible compromise text at the 2001 Annual Meeting. Due to the cancellation of the 2001 Annual Meeting, this issue was deferred until the 2002 Annual Meeting.

In discussions at the 2002 Annual Meeting, considerable concern was expressed from a number of Parties (particularly Canada and the United States) regarding the status of the European Union text and the work of the Dispute Settlement Working Group in general. The United States once again made its view clear that NAFO dispute settlement procedures should be based strongly on those in UNFSA. Since there was little agreement regarding appropriate next steps for the Working Group, the General Council agreed that there should be a consultation between interested Parties (primarily Canada, the European Union and the United States) to determine the usefulness of a further Working Group meeting during 2003. Provisions were made so that, if interested Parties agree on the need, such a meeting could take place.

At the 2003 Annual Meeting, there was general agreement that the Working Group consultations had continued to move the issue forward, but that further work is necessary before a resolution can be reached. After discussions on the sidelines of the annual meeting, the Parties involved in the 2003 consultations recommended that another intersessional meeting take place during 2004. This recommendation was adopted by the General Council, but no date for this meeting was set. At the 2004 Annual Meeting, discussion on this issue was deferred until the 2005 Annual Meeting. It was subsequently deferred indefinitely.

Future Meetings

NAFO has created a working group to consider ways to reform and modernize the Organization. The terms of reference of this group are to: 1) evaluate and recommend changes to the NAFO Convention, with a view to reform the NAFO decision-making process; 2) examine the current structure and operations of NAFO, with a view to streamlining; and 3) provide other relevant recommendations with regard to the NAFO Convention. This group will meet April 2006 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and will provide recommendations to the September 2006 NAFO Annual Meeting. The working group may also meet in 2007 if necessary. In addition, the NAFO Fisheries Commission's Standing Committee on International Control will review the effectiveness of the existing NAFO monitoring, control, and surveillance regime and provide recommendations for improvement at the 2006 annual meeting.

The 2006 NAFO Annual Meeting will be held September 18-22, 2006, in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

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